

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution**

**No. 58**

**Introduced by Assembly Member Parra**

April 26, 2005

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 58—Relative to foster youth.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 58, as introduced, Parra.

This measure would recognize that the rights of foster youth are critical to ensuring their well-being and future, and would urge the State Departments of Social Services, Education, and Mental Health, as well as other designated entities, to develop practices to facilitate making foster youth aware of their rights and available resources.

Fiscal committee: yes.

- 1 WHEREAS, Ninety-five thousand foster children are in care in  
2 California. In removing a child from his or her family and  
3 placing that child in foster care, the state assumes enormous  
4 responsibility. In effect, the state is committed to protecting the  
5 child and ensuring that the child thrives and develops the skills,  
6 supports, and enduring relationships that will sustain him or her  
7 into adulthood; and  
8 WHEREAS, Foster youth are uniquely vulnerable, because  
9 they are completely dependent on the state to meet their needs,  
10 and require additional protection, resources and support to make  
11 a successful transition to adulthood; and  
12 WHEREAS, The Legislature has recognized the importance of  
13 the rights of foster youth by enacting numerous measures to  
14 ensure and strengthen those rights, and has further expressed the

1 intent to ensure that the rights of children in out-of-home  
2 placement are preserved and not infringed upon; and

3 WHEREAS, The Legislature has recognized the need to  
4 expand the foster youth bill of rights to include specific  
5 education and higher education rights as education is the  
6 foundation and key to self-sufficiency for many foster youth; and

7 WHEREAS, If members of the child welfare community and  
8 the public are unaware of the rights of foster youth, they are  
9 unable to meet their collective responsibility to ensure foster  
10 youth are cared for and have adequate access to information; and

11 WHEREAS, Foster youth often lack access to information  
12 about their rights and available resources in their community.  
13 When youth are aware of their rights in foster care, they are able  
14 to self-advocate, which is critical to their success. It is necessary  
15 that all foster youth know that they have specific rights, and that  
16 they know they can call the Office of the State Foster Care  
17 Ombudsperson if there is a violation of those rights; and

18 WHEREAS, Outreach by the state and local foster care  
19 ombudsperson offices to educate foster youth and providers  
20 needs to be consistently supported so the rights afforded foster  
21 youth are meaningful. In recent years, the travel abilities of the  
22 Office of the State Foster Care Ombudsperson have been limited  
23 due to budget concerns; and

24 WHEREAS, Nearly one in every four calls to the Office of the  
25 State Foster Care Ombudsperson concern's a violation of a foster  
26 youth's rights. There is a need to expand the scope of the Office  
27 of the State Foster Care Ombudsperson to include the ability to  
28 independently report to the public and the Legislature regarding  
29 the concerns and complaints of foster youth; and

30 WHEREAS, Two promising steps toward the ensuring that  
31 foster youth are informed of their rights and have access to the  
32 resources needed to be successful are the creation of local foster  
33 care ombudsperson offices and the centralization of all resources  
34 to foster youth in a "one stop center"; and

35 WHEREAS, Everyone who comes into contact with foster  
36 youth should make it their duty to share responsibility for  
37 ensuring that the youth know their rights and are informed of  
38 available education, employment, housing, health, and financial  
39 resources; now, therefore, be it

1     *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*  
2     *thereof concurring,* That the Legislature recognizes that the  
3     rights of foster youth are critical to ensuring their well-being and  
4     future; and be it further

5     *Resolved,* That the Legislature urges the State Department of  
6     Social Services, the State Department of Education, and the State  
7     Department of Mental Health, the County Welfare Directors  
8     Association of Social Workers, the California Judicial Council,  
9     the California State Foster Parent Association, the California  
10    Alliance for Children and Family Services, and the California  
11    Chief Probation Officers Association to develop practices that  
12    will facilitate making foster youth aware of their rights, and of  
13    the resources available to support them both in foster care and as  
14    they transition out of the foster care system; and be it further

15    *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit this  
16    resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.